तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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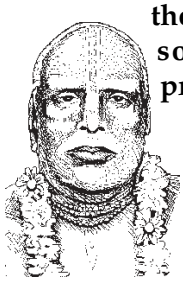
Preachers

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur

1. Who is more beneficial to the world, those who perform *bhajana* in a solitary place or those who preach the holy name of Hari?



A preacher of the holy name, following the example of saintly persons, is more beneficial to the world than devotees who neglect the preaching work by becoming absorbed in the bliss of their own *bhajana* according to their inclination. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4/2)

2. Who is qualified to preach?

Only devotees who possess full knowledge of pure devotional service and who relish the mellows of offenseless chanting of the Lord's holy names are qualified to preach. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 10/11)

3. Can anyone become a preacher if he is an expert speaker?

The responsibility of preaching is better entrusted to those who are engaged in performing *bhajana*. Simply being an expert speaker does not qualify one to preach the teachings of Gauranga. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 10/11)

4. Is it necessary for a preacher to know the science of offenses against the chanting of the holy name?

The preacher should certainly know the offenses against the chanting of the Lord's holy name. If they know this, they will become qualified preachers of the holy name. In the course of preaching the holy names they should instruct everyone to always remain careful to avoid committing offenses against the chanting of the holy name. Otherwise, the preachers will themselves become offenders to the holy name. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 10/11)

5. What is required for pure preaching work?

For pure preaching there are three requirements. First, the chanting of the Lord's holy name should be pure; second, the preacher should be pure; and third, those who hear the preaching should be pure. The chanting of the Lord's holy name being pure means that the holy name described by the preacher should be indicative of the Lord's pastimes and be completely free from any hint of fruitive activities and mental speculation. (*Viṣṇupriyā Pallī Magazine* Vol. 1)

6. Why does a preacher need to be exemplary?

When saintly persons follow religious principles, this is called *ācāra*, proper code of conduct. To preach those religious principles to other living entities in the world is called *pracāra*, preaching. If one wants to engage in the activities of *ācāra* or *pracāra*,

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one should first learn the saintly persons' code of conduct. Some people, after learning, begin to preach even before they themselves follow. Hence, they yield insufficient results. If one does not personally follow the religious principles but preaches to others, he creates a great deal of disturbance in the world. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4/2)

7. Can the smārtas become preachers of devotional service?

Some people do not practice pure devotional service themselves; rather they follow the doctrine of the *smārtas*, which is based on *karma-kāṇḍa*. The science of devotional service that they instruct is totally opposed to all the scriptures. To preach, first one should follow. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4/2)

8. Why is it necessary for a preacher to become pure?

For preachers to become pure is absolutely necessary. Singing the holy names is found everywhere, but when we go to hear them we feel extremely sorry to see the impurity of the singers. Either they are chanting the holy names to stop the spread of disease in the village or they are chanting the holy names out of fear of Yamaraja. Such chanting, which comes from a heart that is polluted by thirst for liberation and material enjoyment, is the perverted reflection of the holy names. To achieve eternal auspiciousness by such chanting is impossible. If the shopkeepers and vendors of the marketplace of the holy name give up such desires they can preach the pure holy names. If, however, they chant the holy names with a desire to either accumulate money or name and fame, the very purpose of opening the marketplace for distributing the Lord's holy names will not be fulfilled. (*Viṣṇupriyā Pallī Magazine* Vol. 2)

— *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* chapter 30. Compiled by and with questions from Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinode. Translated by Sri Bhumipati Das, Published by Sri Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.

Large Numbers Alone is not Success

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

It is of course, no proof of the real success of any religious movement that it has been enabled to secure the allegiance of a large number of professed followers. The actual teachings of no prophet are followed by more than a very small minority of his professed followers.

– Harmonist article January 1932.

The Highest Realization

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

My Dear Ramesvara,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated December 27, 1972, and with great happiness I have read your figures of amount of books sold during three-day period, December 22-24, 1972. It is scarcely believable that more than 17,100 books could have been sold by one temple in three days! That indicates to me that people are at last becoming little serious about this Krishna Consciousness movement in your country. Otherwise, why they should buy our books? But they can see that our boys and girls, devotees, are so much sincere and serious to distribute the message of Krishna consciousness, they are at once struck by seeing them and therefore they appreciate and purchase. This is unique in the world. Perhaps we are the only sincere persons on this whole planet. At least our books are not to be seen anywhere else.

So I am so much pleased upon all of the boys and girls in Los Angeles and all over the world who are understanding and appreciating this unique quality of our transcendental literature and voluntarily they are going out to distribute despite all circumstances of difficulty. By this effort alone they are assured to go back to home, back to Godhead. In order to change this materialistic society and prevent them from gliding to hell, first thing is to educate them. All decent men want to give service to humanity, only thing is they do not have information really what is that service. Hospitals, feeding the poor, Red Cross, these are service to the bodies only, not to the man. Service to humanity means *jñāna*. By giving people knowledge, *jñāna*, that is the highest service to humanity. So we are performing the actual welfare work of society by informing everyone through our literatures who is God, who they are, and what is the relationship. In this way everyone who hears our message gets the opportunity to fulfill his actual position as human entity and become delivered from the clutches of *māyā*. So you may understand it that by disseminating our Krishna consciousness propaganda anywhere and everywhere, by selling books, by making

publicity, newspapers, television, so many ways there are to spread Krishna consciousness information, you may know it that by utilizing our energy in this way to give everyone access to the Absolute Truth, that is the real understanding of desire to serve humanity.

Understanding is one thing and practical application of that understanding is another. But as devotees of Krishna, being engaged in the practical work of spreading Krishna consciousness, that is already the highest realization. That's all right, that is our real mission, to deliver the world by preaching Krishna's message to others. **B**ut even higher realization, the highest realization, is to save oneself.

Hoping this meets you in good health.
Your ever well-wisher
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
— Letter of 9 January 1973

Observance of Ekadasi

Śrī Garga Saṁhita

There are many diverse processes and details recommended in different śāstras *and by different* sādhus *and spiritual masters as to how devotees should observe the* ekādaśī *day. The general principle found in all of them is that a devotee should minimize sense gratification and increase hearing and chanting about Krishna. The following is one of many* śāstric *descriptions.*

The *yajña-sītās*, who had received a blessing from Lord Ramachandra [see previous issue of Bindu], took birth in homes in Vrindavan as beautiful *gopīs* decorated with splendid youthfulness. When they saw handsome Lord Krishna, they became bewildered with love for Him. They then approached Srimati Radharani and said, "O Radha, O beautiful lotus-eyed daughter of King Vrishabhanu, please tell us what vow we may follow to attain Krishna's favor. Dear Radha, You have made Lord Krishna, whom even the great demigods cannot approach, into Your submissive servant. You are the most beautiful girl in all the worlds. You have crossed to the distant shore of the deep meaning of all the scriptures. Please help us fulfill our desire."

śrī-rādhovāca
śrī-kṛṣṇasya prasādārthaṁ kurutaikādaśī-vratam
tena vaśyo hariḥ sākṣād bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ

Sri Radha said, "To attain Lord Krishna's mercy you should follow the vow of fasting on *ekādaśī*. In that way You will make Lord Krishna into your submissive servant. Of this there is no doubt."

The *gopīs* said, "O Radha, please tell us the names of the different *ekādaśīs* throughout the year. Month after month, how should the different *ekādaśīs* be observed?"

Sri Radha said, "During the dark fortnight of the month of *Mārgaśīrṣa* (November-December), in order to kill the demon Mura, the holy day of *ekādaśī* was born from the body of Lord Vishnu. Desiring your welfare, I will tell you the names of the twenty-six sacred *ekādaśīs* that appear in the different months.

utpattiś ca tathā mokṣa sa-phalā ca tataḥ param
putradā ṣaṭ-tilā caiva jayā ca vijayā tathā

āmalakī tataḥ paścān nāmnā vai pāpa-mocanī
kāmadā ca tataḥ paścāt kathitā vai varūthinī

mohinī cāparā proktā nirjalā kathitā tataḥ
yoginī deva-śayanī kāminī ca tataḥ param

pavitrā cāpy ajā padmā indirā ca tataḥ param
pāśāṅkuśā ramā caiva tataḥ paścāt prabodhinī

sarva-sampat-pradā caiva dve prokte malamāsa-je
evaṁ ṣad-viṁśatiṁ nāmnāṁ ekādaśyāḥ paṭhec ca yaḥ

samvatsara-dvādaśīnāṁ phalam āpnoti so 'pi hi

"Their names are: 1. *utpatti*, 2. *mokṣā*, 3. *sa-phalā*, 4. *putradā*, 5. *ṣaṭ-tilā*, 6. *jayā*, 7. *vijayā*, 8. *āmalakī*, 9. *pāpa-mocanī*, 10. *kāmadā*, 11. *varūthinī*, 12. *mohinī*, 13. *aparā*, 14. *nirjalā*, 15. *yoginī*, 16. *deva-śayanī*, 17. *kāminī*, 18. *pavitrā*, 19. *ajā*, 20. *padmā*, 21. *indirā*, 22. *pāśāṅkuśā*, 23. *ramā*, 24. *prabodhinī*. There are also two more *ekādaśīs*, both named *sarva-sampat-pradā*, during the extra month in a leap-year. In this way there are twenty-six *ekādaśīs* in all. A person who chants the names of these twenty-six *ekādaśīs* attains the result of following *ekādaśī* for one year.

"O girls of Vraja, please hear the rules for observing *ekādaśī*. On *ekādaśī* one should control the senses and sleep on the ground. On *dvādaśī* one should eat only once. During *ekādaśī* one should be pure-hearted and very clean, wear clean garments, drink water only once, rise for *brāhma-muhūrta*, and bow down to Lord Krishna. Bathing with well-water is an inferior kind of bath. Bathing in a pond is better, bathing in a lake is better than that, and bathing in a river is better still. In this way one should bathe. On *ekādaśī* day one should be free of greed and

anger, and one should not talk to sinful people, atheists, and offenders. A person who follows the vow of *ekādaśī* should not talk to liars, offenders of *brāhmaṇas*, sinners, debauchees, thieves, adulterers, and the ill-behaved and immoral. In the home one should, with devotion in the heart, worship Lord Krishna and offer Him food and a lamp. From the *brāhmaṇas* one should hear the stories of Lord Krishna. One should offer *dakṣiṇā* to them. One should keep a vigil, singing the glories of Lord Krishna throughout the night.

"For the proper observation of *ekādaśī*, on the *daśamī* day one should avoid these ten things: eating from a brass dish, eating flesh, *masūra dāl*, *kodrava dāl*, chick-peas, spinach, honey, the food of others, eating twice, and sex. One should also avoid gambling, playing, sleeping, chewing betelnuts, and brushing the teeth.

On *ekādaśī* one should avoid harsh speech, slander, theft, violence, sex, anger, and speaking lies. On the *dvādaśī* one should avoid brass utensils, flesh, liquor, honey, oil, speaking lies, the *puṣṭi* ceremony, the *ṣaṣṭi* ceremony, and *masūra dāl*. By following these rules one should observe the great vow of *ekādaśī* and *dvādaśī*.

nāgānāṁ ca yathā śeṣaḥ pakṣiṇāṁ garuḍo yathā
devānāṁ ca yathā viṣṇur varṇānāṁ brāhmaṇo yathā

vṛkṣāṇāṁ ca yathāśvatthaḥ patrāṇāṁ tulasī yathā
vratānāṁ ca tathā gopyo varā caikādaśī tithiḥ

[Radharani then said:] O *gopīs*, as Lord Sesha is the best of serpents, as Garuda is the best of birds, as Lord Vishnu is the best of deities, as the *brāhmaṇas* are the best of castes, as the banyan is the best of trees, and as a *tulasī* leaf is the best of leaves, so fasting on *ekādaśī* day is the best of sacred vows. — 4.8.50-51

After hearing from Sri Radha's mouth the glories of *ekādaśī*, the *gopīs* that had been *yajña-sītās* and who were now yearning to attain Sri Krishna, carefully followed *ekādaśī*. Pleased by their observance of *ekādaśī*, Krishna enjoyed a *rāsa* dance with these *gopīs* on the full-moon night of the month of *Mārgaśīrṣa* (November-December).

— *Garga-saṁhita* 4.8.9-30, 50-51, and 4.9.23-24.

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The Gaura River of Ecstatic Love

By Shekhar Das

(Dhānaśī-rāga)

gaurāṅga rasera nadī premera taraṅga
uthaliyā yāiche dhārā kabhu nahe bhaṅga

From Lord Gauranga flows a great river of nectar. The waves of that river are waves of ecstatic spiritual love. That flooding river never stops flowing.

abhirāma sāraṅga tāya taṭa dui-khāni
acyutānanda tāhe premera ghuraṅi

Abhiram Thakur and Saranga Thakur are that river's two banks. Acyutananda is its whirlpool of ecstatic love.

srota bahi yāya tāhe śrī-adwaita-candra
ḍubāri kāṇḍāri tāhe prabhu nityānanda

Sri Advaitachandra is that river's current. Lord Nityananda is both the diver that swims in that river and the captain of the boat that plies its waters.

prema jalacara śrīvāsādi sahacara
swarūpa śrī-rūpa bhela premera makara

Srivas Thakur and his associates are the fish that swim in those waters of spiritual love. Svarupa Goswami and Rupa Goswami are the sharks that swim in that river.

thākuka ḍubibāra kāja paraśa nā pāiyā
duḥkhiyā śekhara kānde phukāra kariyā

Alas, unable to swim in that river, sad Shekhar Das stays on the bank and loudly weeps.

- Unknown translator. Bengali taken from *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*. Edited by Sri Hare Krishna Mukhopadyaya. Sahitya Samsad. Calcutta. 1980.

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